



Harbinger

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER VOL. 18 NO. 2

Many people have become more environmentally conscious lately. Some go the extra mile and compost their yard waste, others diligently separate glass bottles from plastic ones each month for recycling, still others may bicycle to work to reduce their use of gasoline. But even the most serious environmentalist must admit that doing your part to help save the environment can sometimes be a hassle. Don't get me wrong, composting, recycling, and biking to work are all worthwhile activities, it's just that some people would like to help conserve the environment *and* their elbow grease at the same time! Believe it or not, there are some simple ways to do just that. One enjoyable way is to landscape with native plants—those plants which are found naturally occurring in our geographic area. By

making some simple changes in your home landscape and including some native plants, you can easily help to improve the environment in your immediate area *and* cut back on yard maintenance.

Native plants have a natural drought and disease tolerance, reducing their reliance on supplemental

Why Native Plants?

watering or pesticides. Also, they generally don't require the use of fertilizers. But perhaps the most rewarding aspect of gardening with native plants is the huge benefit to wildlife. Native plants and animals were in Missouri long before the first human beings were and they have become adapted to one another. As a result, many special

relationships have developed between our native plants and animals. For instance, the Monarch butterfly will only lay its eggs on plants belonging to the milkweed family, a family of plants common throughout the state. In addition, seeing a coneflower is equivalent to hearing a dinner bell for many forms of wildlife. There are several different types of coneflowers

ranging from the deep violet blooms of purple coneflower to the drooping yellow petals of yellow coneflower. What all

coneflowers have in common is their ability to attract wildlife. During the blooming season coneflowers attract butterflies, bumblebees, and a host of other nectar- or pollen-seeking insects. However, once the blooms have faded in the fall they continue to attract birds which will come to pluck the seeds from the old flower heads. Given your surroundings, anything from turtles to turkeys can be attracted to your property with the proper use of native plants.

If you'd like to learn more about native plants, their benefits, and how to use them in your home landscape be sure to attend the Naturescaping Symposium on March 20, 9am to 4pm. This day-long series of educational programs concerning native plants will run concurrently with a plant sale featuring many hard-to-find native plants.

Whether you want to save the environment or just a little time and effort, there are many excellent reasons to consider using native plants. Doing your part to help save the environment can be as simple as planting a flower—a native one of course!

~~James Dixon

Earth Day 2004 Work Projects

Registration begins April 1 for each of these work teams.

Saturday, April 3, 9am-Noon

Living Memorial Park Gardens: Bring work gloves and garden tools to spruce up the flower gardens at the park. Meet at the park. Ages 10-adult.

Saturday, April 24, 9am-Noon

Garden Group: Bring gloves and garden tools to help spruce-up the entrance flower bed. Ages 10-adult.

Litter Legwork: Help clean up a year's worth of trash on the nature center grounds. All ages. Bring gloves.

Trail Chippers: Help woodchip a portion of our trail. Ages 7-adult. Bring gloves.

Young Chippers: Help woodchip the Wildlife Viewing Area. Bring your bucket, gloves, and your favorite Big Person. Ages 3-6.

Street Clean-Up: Clean up trash along Glenstone Avenue. Ages 14-adult. Bring gloves.

Adult supervision required for all projects.

Chipping In . . . Volunteer Naturalists

We would like to use this space to introduce you to a new class of Volunteer Naturalists who will graduate on the first of March. They have survived interviews, completed thirty-two hours of training, and have committed to donating a minimum of twelve hours each month for the next year. Please meet these talented Volunteer Naturalists:

Mike Baird – an employee of Overhead Door Company of Springfield who has recently moved back in the area to be closer to his large family;

Jack Bowers – a Burlington Northern Railroad retiree who has been a Wonders of Wildlife Zooquarium volunteer;

Brandi Bristol – a stocker at Bass Pro Shop Catalog Outlet Store who will graduate from SMSU in May with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife Biology;

Linda Brown – a retired elementary teacher from Buffalo, Missouri who has been involved with the Parents as Teachers program and who enjoys watching wildlife in her backyard;

Andy Busch – a retired chemist who moved to this area from California and who has worked with Boy Scouts and as a volunteer at Wonders of Wildlife Zooquarium;

Kimberly Duquette – a substitute teacher who enjoys the out-of-doors and volunteers with the Literacy Council of the Ozarks;

Mary Murphy – an avid birdwatcher who is a member of the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society, a volunteer at Dickerson Park Zoo, and a regular Project FeederWatch volunteer at the nature center;

Matt Patterson – a Fed-Ex handler and college student who volunteers his time helping high school students learn about camping and hiking;

Corinne Schoppet – an undergraduate teaching assistant at SMSU who has field biology research experience;

Sue Schuble – a recently retired high school teacher and coach who loves traveling and volunteering with Dickerson Park Zoo and Wonders of Wildlife Zooquarium;

Larry Scriven – a retired minister who is a volunteer chaplain at Cox Hospital and a volunteer van driver for RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program);

Shane Thomas – a student at SMSU who graduates in May with a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology and who already has a head start on volunteer duties at the nature center taking care of exhibit animals since September;

Dana Tideman – a teacher's aid and regular nature center visitor who works with her husband in their building and lawn maintenance business; and

Carol Van Eaton – an outdoor adventurer who enjoys attending outdoor skills classes like "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" and who has 20 years of customer service and sales experience.

With fourteen members in the class of 2004, we look forward to the contribution of time and talent they will provide and we want to thank them ahead of time for chipping in.

**National Wildlife Week
April 19-25**

**"Explore Nature In Your
Neighborhood."**

Stop by anytime between
2 and 5pm and learn more
about nature in your
neighborhood.

19 Monday—Honeybees

Learn what useful products come from these "backyard buzzers," see live bees, and build a craft.

20 Tuesday—Butterflies & Caterpillars

See some live butterflies and caterpillars and make a craft.

21 Wednesday—Animal Tracks

Learn how to recognize certain animal tracks and make some to take home.

22 Thursday—Trees

Stop by to make a tree ID book.

23 Friday—Crawdads

Look at a live crayfish and make your own "mudbug."

24 Saturday—Flowers

Learn to identify flowers and their many parts. Build your own flower to give to someone special.

25 Sunday—Spiders

Learn about our eight-legged friends and build your own web.

Thank You . . .

The nature center would like to thank Eva Blackshear, Elbert Johnston, and Lance Estep for donating various natural objects; Barbara Lucks for bird feeding supplies; Becky Mathews for library books; Don Baker for bird houses; O P Hardwoods and Home Depot for program supplies; and Dan Brueggeman for five carved bald eagle feather pins for Eagle Days' draw prizes.

Volunteer Milestones

Ruby Ball	2000 Hours
Goose Gosnell	300 Hours
Tracy Richter	200 Hours



March Events at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center

For programs requiring registration, call 888-4237.

Registration for all programs begins the first day of the month.

5 Crepuscular Creep Friday, 6-7pm

Crepuscular creatures are active in the shadowy periods of dusk and dawn. We'll see and hear what's creeping about on this guided evening trek. Families. Registration required.

6 Tree Planting Seminar Saturday, 9-11:30am

You've received your seedlings and they're still in a bundle in your garage. Now what? Conservation Department Urban Forester Jerry Monterastelli has the answers (or at least most of them) and will guide you on planting your young trees. Questions are encouraged. Ages 10-adult. Registration begins February 15.

10 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug Wednesday, 11-11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story. Ages 2-6.

11 Parents As Teachers Story Time

Thursday, 9:30, 10:30 or 11:30am

Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a "Nature At Its Best" story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

12 Nature Investigators Habitats Friday, 4-5pm

Volunteer Naturalist Larry Stuart returns for another installment of Nature Investigators. Imagine being a reptile realtor and learn what reptiles look for when choosing a home. Ages 7-12. Registration required.

Lewis & Clark In Missouri Recent Finds & Hidden Treasures Friday, 7-8pm

While much is known about Lewis and Clark's journey, there is much still to be discovered. Ann Rogers, author of *Lewis and Clark in Missouri*, shares light on recent finds in the Lewis and Clark story and the hidden treasures waiting to be discovered. A book signing by the author will follow the presentation. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

13 Hiking Club Saturday, 8am-4pm

Never get lost again! During this class, you'll learn the basics of using a compass and topographic maps to find your way. After honing our skills together in the classroom, we'll carpool to a local forest where you can put your new-found knowledge to the test. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

18 Riverbluff Cave Springfield's Underground Jewel Thursday, 7-8pm

Look inside Springfield's newest cave in this armchair tour and explore it through the eyes of Project Paleontologist Matt Forir. His program will cover information on conservation efforts, provide a look at recent discoveries, and share secrets locked inside this ice-age cave. Ages 10-adult. Registration required.

19 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Spring Friday, 10-10:45am

Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0-2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

23 White Bass Fishing In The Ozarks Tuesday, 6:30-8pm

Spring is here and white bass have started their spring migration upstream. Find white bass on Missouri's lakes, rivers, and streams and with the right tackle you can have a blast catching these feisty, good eating fish. Learn about tackle, regulations, and where to find fish. Ages 7-adult. Registration required.

25 Missouri's Bears And Cougars Thursday, 7-8:15pm

Encountering a black bear has become more common in Missouri and even a few mountain lion sightings have been confirmed in recent years. These large mammals, once gone from Missouri, are creating lots of excitement—both positive and negative—with their return. Conservation Department Wildlife Damage Biologist Jim Braithwait drops by to separate fact from fiction about these fascinating animals. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

26 Conservation TEEN Club Evening Exploration Friday, 5-9pm

Much of our local wildlife doesn't become active until the sun goes down. Come along as we explore a local conservation area after sunset in search of coyotes, beavers, owls, and other nocturnal wildlife. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

27 Be A Cut Up Saturday, 10-11:30am

Members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers will share their trade secrets, materials, and information with anyone interested in learning more about woodcarving as a hobby. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers Saturday, 10am-4pm

Stop by to watch members of the club transform wood into art.

Wildflower Hike Saturday, 1-2:30pm

What's blooming on the trails? Take a casual stroll with a naturalist for a close look at some of our spring flowers. Ages 7-adult. Registration required.

28 Wildflower Hike Sunday, 1-2:30pm [Same as March 27]

For Adults Only Spring Hike Sunday, 1-6pm

Spend an early spring afternoon with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik as he leads you on a hike at Little Sac Woods Conservation Area. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring water and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately four miles and of moderate difficulty. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

30 Conservation Kids' Club Bee Buzz Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

Bees do far more than sting and make honey. They are an important part of Missouri's ecosystem. Learn bee-related facts, see a live hive, and enjoy a taste of honey as we're joined by members of the Beekeeper's Association of the Ozarks for an un-bee-lievably cool evening. Ages 7-12 only. Please, no younger siblings. Registration required.



April Events at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center

For programs requiring registration, call 888-4237.
Registration for all programs begins the first day of the month.

Movies are shown each
Sunday from 2 to 3pm

2 Hunter Education

**Friday, 6-9pm and
Saturday, 8am-4:30pm**

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967 who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 4:30pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

7 Spring Turkey Hunting Seminar

Wednesday, 7-8pm

Spring turkey season is almost here. Come join Volunteer Naturalist and Missouri Hunter Education Instructor Cole Chatman for some turkey talk about Missouri's elusive wild turkey. Learn about the youth spring turkey hunting season and take home some tips on how to be safe and successful in the woods this spring. Ages 6-adult. *Registration begins March 15.*

9 Nature Investigators Communication

Friday, 4-5pm

Animals communicate through a variety of means, from a dog wagging its tail to a bird singing a song. Join Volunteer Naturalist Larry Stuart for another in-depth look at reptiles to discover how they communicate. Ages 7-12. Registration required.

Conservation TEEN Club Fishing Fun Camp Out

Friday, 4pm to Saturday, 5pm

Come spend the night under the stars at a local conservation area. In the morning, we'll "work" for our food as we learn to catch, clean, and cook fish. Fishing gear, meals, and transportation will be provided. Participants must have their own camping supplies. Permission slips must be signed and returned prior to departure. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

10 For Adults Only Glade Restoration

Saturday, 8am-1:30pm

Help restore a glade at Rocky Barrens Conservation Area to its natural state by removing invading Eastern Red Cedar trees. We need people willing to drag cedar trees to the wood chipper. Afterwards, you're welcome to take cedar chips for your landscaping needs. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring gloves, wear long sleeves, and sturdy footwear. Lunch is provided as well as a tour of the glade by Conservation Department Biologist Mike Skinner. *Registration begins March 15.*

14 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11-11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story. Ages 2-6.

16 Babes In The Woods And Birds, Too

Friday, 10-10:45am

Bring your favorite 0-2 year old and join us on a guided hike as we introduce you and your child to the wonders of the spring woods and to the busy birds within them. Bring a stroller for this Boardwalk Trail hike. Registration required.

18 Primitive Skills Series Useful Plants

Sunday, 1-3pm

Plants have always been important to humans. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explain the folklore and modern uses of several practical Missouri plants. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

23 Babes In The Woods And Birds, Too

Friday, 10-10:45am

[Same as April 16]

Temporary Displays

March: Photography

by Lizabeth Peak

April: Colored Pencil Artwork

by Paralee Lester

24 Hiking Club Saturday, 8am-5pm

Join Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam for a spring hike at Hercules Glade Wilderness. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is moderate and approximately four miles long. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

Earth Day 2004

Work Projects

Saturday, 9am-Noon

Sign up for a work team on the front page.

25 Archery For Beginners Sunday, 1-4pm

Learn the basics of archery and spend time practicing your new skills at the shooting range at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area. Meet at the range and bring your own gear, if you have it. Ages 11-adult. Registration required.

Summer Hummers

Sunday, 5-6:30pm

Believe it or not, hummingbirds are already returning to the Ozarks. Join hummingbird bander Sarah Driver as she shares information and anecdotes about hummingbirds and attempts to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

27 Conservation Kids' Club Keeping The Balance

Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm

Help us celebrate National Wildlife Week and Earth Day with an evening devoted to learning about the earth's delicate balance and how it affects wildlife populations. Participate in "balancing" games and have lots of fun as we learn about the conservation of Missouri's natural resources. Ages 7-12 only. Please, no younger siblings. Registration required.

March 6 and April 3

HIKED IT . . . LIKED IT!

Enjoy a naturalist-guided hike for families on the first Saturday of each month from 9 to 11am.



Little Acorns . . .

Little Acorns programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit Little Acorns programs to one per month.

March

Registration begins
the first day of
the month.

Beautiful Bluebirds

The eastern bluebird is one of Missouri's most popular animals and our state bird. Bring your most popular preschooler to discover this "symbol of happiness."

Tuesday, March 9, 10am or 1pm
Saturday, March 13, 11am

Spring Has Sprung

Come hear a special story about some nature center residents as they wake up to spring!

Friday, March 26, 11am
Saturday, March 27, 11am or 1pm

Spring Peepers

It's time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny spring peeper.

Friday, March 19, 1pm
Wednesday, March 31, 10am or 1pm

April

Registration begins
the first day of
the month.

Cottontail Tales

Come have a hoppin' good time as you learn about the life story of this familiar Missouri resident.

Tuesday, April 13, 1pm
Thursday, April 22, 11am or 1pm

Egg-squisite Eggs

Bring your little ones and learn egg-sactly how and why animals begin their lives in these wonderful little packages.

Saturday, April 3, 11am or 1pm
Friday, April 9, 1pm

Worm Squirm

Worms squiggle and wiggle and crawl through the dirt. They eat dead plants and make soil for the earth! Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan and learn more about these underground creatures.

Friday, April 16, 11am or 1pm

Mark your calendar now to attend . . .

Super Scout Saturday

Saturday, May 15

10am-4pm

Attention: Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors; Tigers, Wolves, Bears, and Webelos; Camp Fire USA; and Royal Rangers.

Here's another opportunity for the groups listed above to have fun learning while earning nature-oriented badges. Stations set up throughout the building will provide information and/or activities that will satisfy certain requirements for various badges. Mix and match stations to complete as many requirements as you like. Adult supervision is required. Call or stop by the nature center for more information.



The Nature Nook Gift Shop . . .

The gift shop's featured special will be *Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri* (softbound). This book retails for \$12 but will be 20% off in March and April (no other discounts apply).

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 17

10am to 5pm

Discovery Center of Springfield, 438 St. Louis

Learn about area environmental and conservation organizations and enjoy educational activities, exhibits, and workshops. Visit their newest traveling exhibit—Healthy Soils, Healthy Foods, Healthy You—and meet area experts. Admission is free.

Harbinger Highlights . . .

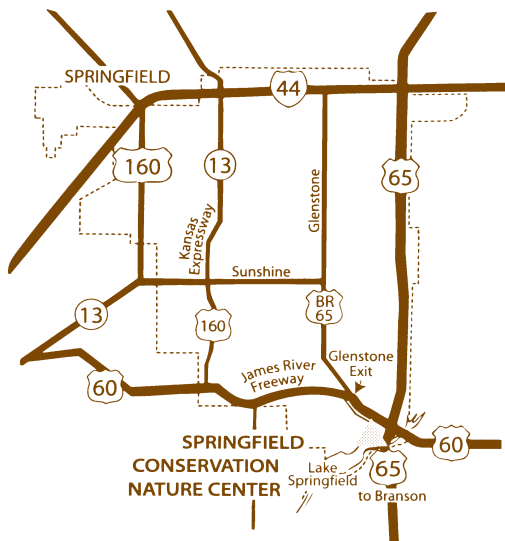
Defined, harbinger (pronounced här'bīn-jər) is anything that fore-shadows a future event; omen; sign. Warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours indicate to us that spring is fast approaching. For others, the bloom of the season's first wildflowers announces the arrival of spring, and this has people preparing the groundwork for flower gardens and landscaping. So why not model your yard with native plants the way mother nature does?

Native seeds work best if planted on soil that has no green vegetation. Cover the area with black plastic for two months to kill any existing growing vegetation.

Broadcast native seeds on soil that has been raked (covering them with soil can reduce seed germination).

Mowing and removing cut vegetation can help sunlight reach seeds and young plants during the first and second growing seasons. In future years, mowing or burning (if feasible) can prevent invasion of unwanted plants.

Some plants have very precise habitat requirements for soil, temperature range, moisture, light or shade, competition with other plants, and tolerance to summer droughts. Selecting native plants gives them the advantage needed to grow in much of the rocky terrain and poorer soil types found throughout the Ozarks.



HOURS—The area is open daily 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. from March 1 to October 31, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

STAFF

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Linda Chorce	Manager
April Dozier	Interpretive Programs Supervisor
Kim Banner	Naturalist
James Dixon	Naturalist
Donna Legg	Naturalist
Rudy Martinez	Naturalist
Debbie Baker	Office Supervisor
Nelda Hendrix	Administrative Staff Assistant
Cole Chatman	General Clerk
Paula Mangan	Maintenance
Eric McMillan	Maintenance
Dave Rutledge	Maintenance
Mike Tillman	Maintenance
Mike Wilson	Maintenance

Naturescaping Symposium and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, March 20

9am-4pm



Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. There will be a series of guest speakers espousing the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale featuring many native plants that are drought resistant and beneficial to wildlife. Call to receive a flier listing the day's activities. No fee or registration required for programs.

<<http://www.MissouriConservation.com>>

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Missouri Department of Conservation
Springfield Conservation Nature Center



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